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RENE BACHE'S BUDGET.

UNCLE SAM'S OWN DIET BOX

TO FURNISH KNOWLEDGE FOR USE OF CLEVER HOUSEWIVES.

Apparatus Set Up at the Department of Agriculture for Studying Foods—The Problem of the Human Store. To Ascertain the Amount of Energy Obtained From Differt Diets.

Washington, D. C., July 2.—Uncle Sam has a new diet box. It has been set up in the basement of the new building of the department of agriculture, and will be devoted to the business of studying food problems. About half the size of an ordinary hall bedroom, it is big enough for a human being to live in— which, in fact, is exactly the purpose for which it is intended.

People are worried about the high price of things to eat. They will be interested, then, to know that the experiments to be made with the diet box will teach them how they may live better at a cheaper rate. To themselves especially will the factor obtained be useful. For, after all, they are the home workers; the household is their workshop, and the domestic kitchen is merely a diet box on a large scale.

Tens of thousands of women break down in middle life, because, while bringing up a family, they have had, year after year, a little more work to do every day than their strength would warrant. Knowledge, such as the Diet Box affords, will give them more time and easier time. One reason why the government has gone into this business is that girls nowadays have no chance to learn the domestic arts at home as they could 50 years ago, say, when methods of living were less complex. But what the experts pronounce particularly to teach is the science back of the art—the true theory that lies behind the "know how."

Determines Food Energy.
The diet box is a machine for ascertaining the exact value of any kind of food for the production of energy.

A man is put into it, and lives in it for a week or a fortnight. He sleeps in it, and is not allowed to leave it day or night. It is his home for the time being. So far as possible, he is made comfortable, with a folding bed, a little table, and a chair. A telephone enables him to speak to the watchers outside, and with the help of a messenger in decent light, he can read if he so wishes.

Now, the man is looked upon, for the purposes of the experiment, exactly as if he were a stove. The food given him to eat, which is passed through a small window in the box, is just as truly fuel as the coal or wood that is put into an ordinary iron stove. Like the wood or coal, it produces a certain amount of energy. Part of this energy is used for running the man's internal mechanism—to keep his heart pump going, to accomplish the digestive processes, and so on. The balance may be utilized for muscular work.

But all of this energy, however employed, is eventually transformed into heat. And, in terms of heat, it can be measured with utmost accuracy. For a current of water is kept continually flowing through the box while the man is inside of it. The water to keep up the heat which his body (the human stove) gives off; and, inasmuch as the original temperature of the water, its quantity, and its rate of flow are exactly known, there is no difficulty in reckoning the quantity of heat added.

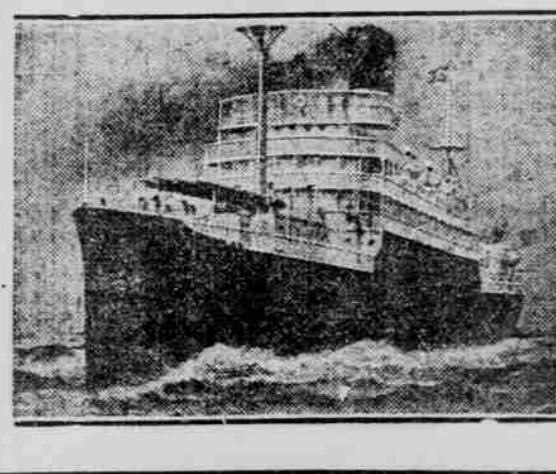
Electric Thermometers Used.
The heat is measured by electric thermometers of extraordinary delicacy, which mark even the hundredth part of a degree Fahrenheit. So sensitive are these instruments that, if the man in the box turns over in bed, they show a rise of temperature. If he yawns and stretches his arms, they show a further rise. If he sits up in bed, they go up a little more. If he gets out of bed and walks around, they jump considerably.

Even while the man is fast asleep, he is using energy for breathing, for his heart pump, etc., and this energy is exactly measured, in terms of heat, by the thermometers outside. But it is easy enough to ascertain by the same means the amount of energy consumed by a human being hard at work. If a woman, for example, were put into the box, and spent half an hour sweeping the floor, the apparatus would show exactly how much energy she expended in the operation. Or, if preferred, she might run a sewing machine. By long, in just this way, it will be ascertained what a woman power is—a thing at present unknown. It will be interesting to know what is the relation between a woman power and a man power.

New Use for Bicycle.
An ingenious method adopted for determining the amount of energy expended in muscular work is to put into the box a stationary bicycle, on which the occupant is mounted. It has no front wheel, and the rear wheel revolves in such a way that its rim passes between the armatures of an electro-magnet. By this means the energy developed is converted into electricity, which can be accurately measured. Meanwhile, and at all times while the man is in the box, he is giving off in his breath invisible material which corresponds to the smoke really poisonous that pass out of the chimney of the stove, and this is caught and analyzed.

For ventilation, a current of air is kept continually passing through the box. Its composition, when it enters is known—just how much oxygen it contains, how much carbonic acid gas, and so on. When it comes out, it is again analyzed—that is to say, samples of it are taken from time to time for analysis. Sometimes there is more oxygen left in the air than comes out, and sometimes less; the same is true of the carbonic acid gas. The varying ratio between the two indicates changes in the bodily condition of the man.

Oxygen Supply Varies.
One fact ascertained, which seems strange, is that the proportion of oxygen in the air inside of the box may vary very much without exciting the



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attention of the occupant. But this is not nearly so odd as the circumstance that the percentage of carbonic acid gas may be made 100 times greater than the normal without having the slightest effect upon the subject of the experiment. From these observations has been drawn the conclusion that carbonic acid gas is not really poisonous at all, and that the discomfort in the atmosphere is due to low atmospheric pressure, and not to lack of oxygen.

While the experiments are in progress, an observer, stationed at a desk outside the box watches the electric thermometer and the other automatic instruments. The water vapor and carbonic acid gas given off by the body of the occupant are measured, as well as the amount of oxygen consumed. Fresh oxygen is contributed from a tank to the current of air that is kept flowing through the box.

All Food Becomes Heat.

As already explained, all of the energy developed from the food supplied to the occupant of the box is eventually transformed into heat. It is reckoned in "calories"—a calorie being the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water four degrees Fahrenheit. When fast asleep, the man's body gives out from 60 to 75 calories an hour, or enough heat to raise 15-10 to 17-10 pounds of water from freezing to boiling point. When he sits still in a chair, the heat given out is from 100 to 115 calories. At moderate exertion (on the bicycle) it is 200 calories or more. At severe labor (riding very hard), it is 600 calories. By such means it has been ascertained that an ordinary man, engaged in fairly active occupation, develops enough heat in 24 hours to raise 75 pounds of water from freezing to boiling.

From what has already been said it will be understood that, in order to find out the amount of energy obtainable by the human body from any kind of food, it is necessary merely to feed that particular food to a person shut up in the diet box and measure the heat given off by his body.

In this way professor C. Ford Langworthy, who is in charge of the experiment, proposes to test the comparative value, for fuel purposes—that is to say, for running the body machine—of olive oil, lard, butter, beef suet, and other culinary fats. He is going to do the same thing with fruits and nuts, and products made from them. Nuts, by the way, are the most highly concentrated of all foods supplied by nature. The kernels of walnuts and al-

monds are mostly oil (65 and 68 percent, respectively), being nearly as rich in oil (vegetable fat) as olives.

Experiment Station in Charge.

The work is being done by a division of the office of experiment stations, in the department of agriculture. All foods, of course, whether animal or vegetable, are agricultural products—which is the reason why the department has undertaken the investigations here described. One of the latter relates to the food values of meat of different kinds, and of different "cuts" prepared in various ways—a question of much importance just now in economical household management. A special study is to be made of the digestibility of cheese made by various processes, and cured in various lengths of time.

Proof of the widespread popular interest in such matters is afforded by the fact that no fewer than 150 colleges, scattered all over the country, are now giving instruction in districts, while proper methods of preparing foods are taught in every city high school that pretends to be up to date. What professor Langworthy and his assistant experts are trying to do is to furnish information that will enable people to live better and more cheaply. For knowledge in regard to such things means saving, as well as better living. It lessens waste.

Rene Bache.

RAINS INSURE CROPS AT COLONIA PACHECO

Wheat and Oats Promise Well—Mormon Colony News Notes.

Colonia Pacheco, Mex., July 2.—The coming of the rains several weeks earlier this year has insured a good wheat and oat crop. The kernels are filling out nicely and the prospects are good for the heaviest crop ever harvested in this part of the country. Corn and potatoes are looking well and fruit will be more abundant than ever before, especially blackberries.

William Black, who was injured by being thrown from a horse, is recovering. The little son of Theodore Martineau, who was injured by being thrown from a buggy on Easter, will be able to walk without crutches soon.

RAILROAD WORK RUSHED:
GOOD RAINS AT DUBLIN
Colonia Dublin, Mex., July 2.—Farmers here are rushing the railroad

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work, being anxious to get it done before the storms wash away the grade. The recent rains have raised the river so that irrigation has commenced again.

John Memmott has put up a new wind mill on his town property. Tomatoes are usually only starting to form on the vines.

COLONIA JUAREZ NEWS.
Colonia Juarez, Mex., July 2.—Mrs. Louisa Walser went to El Paso to meet her son, Alma, who has been working in Arizona, where he will return after a short visit here.

Mrs. Millie Snow and two daughters have returned home from Provo, Utah, where the girls have been in school.

HERNANDEZ DOG BITES NURSE.
Colonia, Hernandez, Mex., July 2.—Mrs. Margaret Barron, a trained nurse, was bitten by a dog. Her limb was badly lacerated. The James Orchard is loaded with fruit and the squash crop will be very large this season.

Fourth July watermelons On Ice, Ardoin's Market.